

**Massachusetts Department of Public Health
Division of Epidemiology and Immunization**

Vaccine Management Business Improvement Project (VMBIP)

What is VMBIP?

VMBIP represents the efforts of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to improve current vaccine management processes at the federal, state and local levels. The goals of the project are to identify opportunities and develop solutions towards improving efficiency, accountability, and the nation's ability to respond to public health crises.

CDC is contracting with a national distributor (McKesson) to ship all publicly purchased vaccine directly to providers to consolidate inventories and reduce the number of times vaccine is handled during the delivery process.

Why does the Federal Government Need VMBIP?

Vaccine management and accountability needs have grown dramatically since the inception of the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program in 1994. However, many vaccine management and accountability processes are still conducted using methods and technology established more than a decade ago. Consisting of a patchwork of stand-alone computer applications and paper-based systems operated by CDC and state and local immunization programs, these processes are cumbersome and expensive to manage. They do not allow for rapid responses to changes in vaccine supply and demand at the national, state or local levels and produce inconsistent levels of accountability at the individual provider level.

VMBIP Goals

The goals of the Vaccine Management Business Improvement Project (VMBIP) are to:

- Simplify processes for the ordering, distribution, and management of vaccines in order to be able to respond more quickly and effectively to public health crises related to disease outbreaks, vaccine shortages, and disruption of the vaccine supply.
- Implement a more efficient vaccine supply system that will result in the redirection of vital public health resources away from vaccine distribution and towards public health activities that will improve immunization coverage levels.
- Enable the direct delivery of vaccine to providers.

VMBIP and Massachusetts

Centralized vaccine distribution through McKesson is expected to begin in Massachusetts in March 2008. MDPH is working with CDC on the transition plans. Providers can anticipate the following changes:

- All orders will be centrally processed through the MDPH Vaccine Unit and shipped directly to your office from the distributor (similar to the current process for varicella vaccine).
- Providers will no longer be able to pick up vaccine locally.
- Providers will need to plan ahead when ordering, allowing time for delivery of vaccine, which could be 1-2 weeks.

- Provider office staff will need to be trained on accepting shipments of vaccine, which includes opening the shipment immediately, ensuring that the cold chain has been maintained during shipment, and properly storing the vaccine once it arrives.

It is important to note that state-supplied vaccine will continue to be provided free of charge and that there will not be any cost to providers associated with shipping.

MDPH will also be evaluating the impact of this transition on the role of the MDPH Regional Health Offices and local vaccine distributors. These offices play a critical role in the Department's emergency preparedness and pandemic influenza planning. In addition, Massachusetts purchases more influenza vaccine with state funds than any other state. Most of this vaccine is purchased through a state contract. It has not been determined if CDC will distribute this vaccine for Massachusetts or if we will need to maintain the current distribution system for influenza vaccine.

This is an introduction to some of the expected changes and unresolved issues. MDPH will engage stakeholders over the coming months to address issues related to the transition and will keep you well informed of the project progress.

Where can I get more information?

If you have questions about VMBIP and its impact on you or your office, you can call the Vaccine Management Unit at (617) 983-6828 or toll-free at (888) 658-2850. You can also call one of the MDPH Regional Health Offices below.

Northeast Regional Office	Tewksbury	(978) 851-7261
Central Regional Office	West Boylston	(508) 792-7880
Southeast Regional Office	Taunton	(508) 977-3709
Metro/Boston Regional Office	Jamaica Plain	(617) 983-6860
Western Regional Office	Amherst	(413) 545-6600

Adapted from the National Immunization Program Vaccine Management Business Improvement Plan webpage.
Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nip/vmbip/default.htm>. Accessed on March 14, 2007.